



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of January 22, 2004

3:00 p.m. Greensboro, NC

Blue Room

(County Commissioners' Briefing Room)

Old Guilford County Courthouse

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair
Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair
Doug Galyon	NC Board of Transportation
Keith Holliday	Mayor, City of Greensboro
Don Vaughan	Greensboro City Council
Mary Rakestraw	Guilford County Board of Commissioners

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	GDOT/MPO	Gregg Danzer	Town of Pleasant Garden
Jeff Sovich	GDOT/MPO	Ray Combs	Town of Oak Ridge
Craig McKinney	GDOT/MPO	Stephen Stansbery	Kimley-Horn Associates
Peggy Holland	GDOT/MPO	Don Bryson	Martin-Alexiou-Bryson
Kimberly Hinton	NCDOT - SWP	Mike Cowan	NCDOT, Division 7
Scott Rhine	PART	Robert Gordon	Town of Summerfield
Bill Marley	FHWA, NC Division	Steve Gladson	King's Mill Home Owner's Association
Michael Brandt	Town of Summerfield		

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of November 19, 2003

Don Vaughan moved for approval of the minutes. Mary Rakestraw seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes as prepared.

2. Approval of Provisional Congestion Management System

Jeff Sovich advised that the Greensboro MPO was designated as a Transportation Management Area on July 8, 2002. As a TMA, Greensboro is required to develop and implement a Congestion Management System within 18 months of designation. A CMS is a coordinated package of planning, programming, and operational strategies aimed at improving the safety, reliability, and efficiency of the transportation system. Guidance from the Federal Highway Administration North Carolina Division specifies that a new TMA may demonstrate satisfactory progress toward implementation of a CMS by submitting a detailed CMS outline no later than January 8, 2004. The MPO may adopt the detailed CMS outline as its provisional CMS at its first scheduled meeting of 2004, provided that a fully functional CMS is adopted at the time of the MPO's next scheduled update of its long range transportation plan. MPO staff have prepared and submitted a Detailed CMS Outline by January 8, which was accepted by the FHWA NC Division. A full CMS is currently under development by staff and the consultant team and is on pace to be completed and adopted concurrently with the 2030 LRTP around June or July. The adoption will include the required public involvement component. The resolution presented today approves the Detailed CMS Outline as the MPO's provisional CMS. The recommended action is approval of the resolution as presented.

Mayor Holliday requested that staff prepare a "dictionary" or "glossary" of transportation terms and MPO plans and programs, that the TAC can use as a quick reference guide. This guide would provide a brief summary of each item, and the current status or effective dates of plans and programs. Jim Westmoreland replied that staff would work to prepare such a guide.

Don Vaughan moved to approve the resolution as presented; Mary Rakestraw seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution adopting the Detailed CMS Outline.

Business / Potential Action Items

1. 2006 – 2012 TIP Development Update

Jeff Sovich advised that the development timeline for the 2006 – 2012 Transportation Improvement Program has been shifted back slightly, compared with previous TIP cycles, partially due to the fact that Congress has not yet approved a transportation appropriations bill for fiscal year 2004. The result is that the priority needs process, which is currently under way, will continue through at least February, followed by the TIP negotiation meeting with NCDOT, around the end of March, rather than the usual January timeframe. The draft TIP project listings by MPO will be released by NCDOT around September of 2004, followed by the draft TIP Division 7 public hearing in October. The MPO will have a negotiation session on the draft TIP with NCDOT in around January, 2005. From February through July 2005, NCDENR will conduct the air quality conformity analysis. There will be a public review and comment period on the draft MTIP in mid-2005, followed by adoption by the TAC in late summer 2005. The 2006 – 2012 MTIP will become effective on October 1, 2005.

The MPO is currently in the early stages of the two year TIP development cycle. As part of this process, a public meeting on transportation needs in the Greensboro area was held on January 13. The meeting consisted of an informal drop-in session, followed by an informational presentation, and concluded with a question and comment session. A summary of the comments and suggestions received during the meeting is included in the materials provided for today's meeting. The public comment period ends tomorrow, Friday, January 23. At that time, staff will compile and review all comments received. These comments will feed into the priority needs process of the MTIP and the future transportation needs inventory of the LRTP. Staff and the TCC will continue to refine the draft priority needs list and future study needs, and will present these for more detailed discussion and proposed adoption in February. Staff will provide further updates on the TIP development process at upcoming meetings.

2. LRTP Development Update

Tyler Meyer advised that recent public involvement activities related to the Long Range Transportation Plan have been extensive. These activities have included a meeting of community influencers, a telephone survey of residents of the MPO area outside the City of Greensboro, which complemented a similar survey of City residents, which was conducted earlier in 2003. In November, a series of 4 public workshops was held; one in downtown Greensboro, one in the northwestern part of Guilford County, one on the eastern part of the County and one in the southern part of the County. Staff will soon prepare a summary of the public input received to date. A series of interviews of key community leaders has also been conducted.

Staff have also conducted substantial analysis of existing conditions, expected future conditions, and the implications for transportation options likely to be available for the TAC's consideration in the future. The LRTP development process is approximately at its mid-point. A second round of public involvement is about to begin, and completion and TAC approval of the plan is anticipated around mid-year. Consequently, the current stage in this process is pivotal.

Stephen Stansbery advised that the LRTP development process has been devised to include public involvement activities at every stage, with the intent of engaging the public in a dialogue regarding their transportation needs and preferences. The public involvement activities have been grouped into three rounds, each with a different focus. The goals of the first round have been to provide information, to stimulate discussion, and to elicit feedback on various transportation topics. Over 170 individuals participated in the first round of public meetings, 50 of whom completed the questionnaire that was distributed. Over 1,200 City and County residents responded to the two telephone surveys, which constitute statistically valid random samples of both populations. The mayors of the 5 towns in the study area have been interviewed. Mayor Holliday and Board of County Commissioners Chairman Landreth will also be interviewed.

To date, input from the public meetings, and telephone surveys has been compiled, analyzed, and summarized. Responses that were most frequently expressed among all the sources of input include: support for enhancements to the efficiency and effectiveness of local public transportation; a perceived need for enhanced regional public transportation services or infrastructure; and an emphasis on expanding the network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and improving the connectivity of these facilities. Other notable responses include: a desire for construction of selected additional highway facilities; a desire for a modern traffic signal system; and a perceived need to more effectively control travel speeds on some facilities. Complete summaries of all the input received are available on the web site for the LRTP: www.greensboro-nc.gov/lrtp.

Upcoming public involvement activities will include the second round of four public workshops, completion of the interviews of public officials, and a second newsletter on the status of the LRTP project. The public workshops will be held on February 16, 18, 19, and 23. The times and locations of these meetings is also available on the LRTP web site.

Don Bryson advised that modeling of the existing transportation system for the base year (2002) and preliminary 2030 conditions has been completed. These initial results indicate that the committed future projects and proposed projects in the Thoroughfare Plan do produce some localized reductions in congestion levels, but that overall, the additional supply of transportation infrastructure in the form of lane miles will not keep pace with the growth in travel demand, in terms of vehicle-miles traveled. A system-wide comparison of the current network to the existing plus committed network and the LRTP network reveals only a slight increase in total lane-miles by 2030, most of which consists of freeway facilities, primarily the Greensboro Urban Loop. However, due to the projected increase in total travel from 12 million to around 20 million vehicle-miles per year, both the number of congested lane-miles of roads and the proportion of travel time that motorists spend on congested roads will increase. In addition, a collector and local streets will comprise a growing share of the congested facilities, where there has previously been very little congestion. This evidence suggests that investment in future transportation infrastructure should target projects that will produce the greatest congestion reduction benefits for the funds expended. The next step in this process will involve further analysis and interpretation of the modeling results, and determining what types of projects are needed in order to slow or stop the growth of traffic congestion.

The LRTP investment strategy will be developed by preparing a range of scenarios for the future transportation system, based on several general investment strategies. These scenarios will be presented to the public for consideration during the second round of public workshops. One scenario will consist of the existing plus committed projects, as a baseline scenario. Another scenario will focus heavily on future roadway capacity improvements. A third scenario will be strongly oriented toward enhancements to alternative modes of travel, such as pedestrian, bicycle, public transportation, and regional transit improvements. These scenarios will be used to gauge the preferences and priorities of the public for how the future transportation system should operate and how transportation funding should be allocated. Public reaction to these scenarios will be used by the project team and the Technical Committee in developing the actual project lists and horizon-year networks for the final LRTP.

Tyler Meyer advised that completion of the 2030 LRTP is scheduled for Summer 2004. At the second round of public workshops, staff and the consultant team will provide an overview of the public input received to date, a summary of the results of analysis work and its implications for likely future transportation conditions. Attendees will then have an opportunity to make comments and suggestions on the recommended investment strategy and core set of projects for the plan. Staff will present additional information, including preliminary results from the second round of public workshops, during the TAC's February meeting.

3. MPO Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer advised that the reauthorization of TEA-21 by Congress was not completed at the time of its expiration, so a six month extension was enacted. That extension is due to expire at the end of January. Congress is working to finalize the surface transportation reauthorization, but the current status suggests that another interim extension, possibly twelve months in length, is likely. Such an extension would allow continuing deliberations and exploration of enhanced revenue options. There is a

possibility that reauthorization will not be completed until after the November elections, because raising the gasoline tax, which is seen as the most viable means of generating the needed revenue, is likely to be unpopular with voters.

In a previous meeting, it was mentioned that a meeting of local public officials regarding the US 421 interchanges project would be scheduled sometime in January. That meeting has not yet been scheduled, but will probably occur sometime in early Spring, and will be followed shortly by the official public hearing for the project.

Regarding the High Point Road widening and relocation project, significant public comments were received during the public involvement process conducted late last year. NCDOT has scheduled a post-hearing consultation meeting with agency stakeholders to determine the significance of those comments and the likely impacts to the project, and what the next steps will be. Staff will continue to update the TAC as further developments unfold.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

Doug Galyon advised that in the TEA-21 reauthorization deliberations, the US House of Representatives has proposed a bill totalling \$370 billion, while the Senate's proposal totals \$317 billion. This difference will need to be resolved when the bills reach the conference phase. We hope that the end result will be closer to the higher figure, but we cannot tell at this point which direction that discussion will lead. But the overall level of support among Congress for this legislation suggests that the final amount will definitely exceed the president's proposal of \$280 billion.

The Southern Urban Loop is now finished and ready except for the interchange off ramps at US 220. NCDOT has decided that the best course of action will be to delay opening the facility until all the ramps are completed. This final construction work will require approximately six weeks to complete. This will have the Southern Urban Loop open well in advance of the National Home Furnishings Market in April, which will benefit greatly from the availability of this alternate route.

Initial construction work on the Western Urban Loop, in the vicinity of Bryan Boulevard, has begun. This is the most densely populated area, through which construction for the loop has passed, so far. Much more restrictive standards for noise, glare, and other construction impacts have been implemented for this segment. However, there will inevitably be complaints and concerns raised by nearby residents.

Completion of the I-40 widening project is likely to be delayed until Spring. At present the contractor is incurring a penalty for each day construction continues past the contract due date.

2. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns

Gregg Danzer inquired whether the travel modeling being conducted in conjunction with the 2030 LRTP included a time-weighted factor to account for the expected traffic patterns resulting from the planned Federal Express transfer hub, which will not reflect typical commuting flows. Don Bryson responded that the model does not produce time-of-day traffic forecasts for specific sites, but rather peak-hour forecasts for each traffic analysis zone.

With regard to the 2030 LRTP, the Town of Pleasant Garden remains concerned about issues surrounding the potential Spur Road/Nesbitt Road and Ridgepoint Drive/SR 3414 connections. We feel that these connections would be obviated by the soon to be opened Southern Urban Loop, and want our residents to continue to have direct local access to their homes.

Michael Brandt advised Robert Gordon met with Mike Mills to discuss the concern that was raised during the November TAC meeting regarding a sharp curve on NC 150 near the future interchange on the planned I-73 corridor. Mills indicated that there may be funds available to help address the safety concerns presented by this location.

The Town of Summerfield may soon bring forth applications for enhancement grants for several bicycle or pedestrian related projects. The Town will seek endorsement by the TAC for these applications.

Ray Combs inquired as to the nature of NCDOT projects planned for the vicinity of NC 68 and US 150. Mike Cowan responded that he would investigate and provide that information to Mayor Combs.

3. Citizen Comments

Steve Gladson expressed concerns regarding the combined impacts of the Southern Urban Loop and the High Point Road widening and relocation projects upon the King's Mill neighborhood. In particular, the High Point Road project is expected to close the current local access into the neighborhood, and the Urban Loop will not have noise barrier walls installed for the full length of its path through the neighborhood. The members of the King's Mill Home Owner's Association feel that their concerns have not been treated appropriately by the staff of the NCDOT Division 7 offices. Doug Galyon responded that he would direct Mike Mills to arrange a meeting with Gladson and any relevant NCDOT staff from the Raleigh offices to answer Gladson's questions.

4. Regional Transportation News

Sandy Carmany advised that the Southern Environmental Law Center has announced that it intends to file a lawsuit challenging the Early Action Compact process. The EAC process would allow the effective date of the Triad's 1-hour ozone non-attainment designation to be deferred until 2007. However, if successful, the SELC lawsuit could invalidate the EAC process and thereby abruptly throw the Triad into non-attainment status. The Triad EAC partners will continue to monitor this situation and keep the TAC informed of further developments.

5. Wrap-Up

None.

The TAC adjourned at 5:10 p.m.